

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9278

S E C R E T LONDON 02892

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, ZA, MILI

SUBJECT: KAUNDA REQUEST FOR ARMS

1. EMBASSY ODFICER HAS BRIEFED ME ON HIS FEBRUARY 24 CONVERSATION WITH TINY ROWLAND, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF LONRHO. ROWLAND SPENT SEVERAL HOURS LAST WEDNESDAY NIGHT AND THURSDAY MORNING IN DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT KAUNDA. THEIR TALK WAS FREQUENTLY INTERRUPTED BY EXCHANGES BETWEEN KAUNDA AND SEVERAL OF HIS SENIOR MILITARY LEADERS, AND AT ONE POINT, KAUNDA RECEIVED A TELEPHONE REPORT OF A BRIEF CUBAN ILCURSION OVER ZAMBIAN FRONTIERS. THE PRESIDENT REMAINED RELAXED THROUGHOUT HIS TIME WITH ROWLAND BUT HE CLEARLY WAS A MAN UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE.

2. KAUNDA TOLD ROWLAND THAT AS PRESIDENT HE MUST NOW BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE TO HIS OWN MILITARY LEADERSHIP, TO HIS POLITICAL COLLEAGUES IN ZAMBIA, AND TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES THAT HE IS IN CONTROL OF HIS NATION. HE IS APPREHENSIVE THAT THE MOMENTUM OF EVENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA COULD OVERWHELM HIM. HE MUST SHOW OBSERVERS BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF ZAMBIA THAT HIS WORDS ARE NOT EMPTY, THAT HE IS NOT TO BE INTIMIDATED, AND THAT HE IS NOT A LOSER. KAUNDA THEN ASKED ROWLAND TO ARRANGE FOR ZAMBIA TO OBTAIN SIX TO TEN SAM-7 WEAPONS. HE SAID THE MILITARY ENZECT OF THIS ACQUISITION COULD BE INCONSEQUENTIAL, BUT ITS POLITICAL IMPACT ON HIS COMMAND-

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ERS AND HIS NEIGHBORS WOULD BE COMPELLING. KAUNDA NEEDS

TO DEMONSTRATE HIS VIGOR, AND THIS IS THE WAY HE WANTS TO DO IT.

3. ROWLAND SAYS HE CAN OBTAIN SAM-7'S FROM EGYPT IF HE HAS TO, AND HE IS PREPARED TO GO TO CAIRO IMMEDIATELY. ROWLAND HAS TOLD US OF KAUNDA'S DESIRE BECAUSE HE THINKS IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE USG NOW DEMONSTRATE TO KAUNDA OUR OWN VIGOR AND OUR OWN INTEREST IN THE STABILITY OF ZAMBIA. ALTHOUGH SAM-7'S MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO ACQUIRE, A LIMITED NUMBER OF OTHER WEAPONS WITH THE EQUIVALENT POLITICAL IMPACT WOULD FILL THE BILL. THE SOURCE OF THE ARMS IS AT THIS STAGE IMMATERIAL. ROWLAND IS WILLING TO ARRANGE WHATEVER TRANSPORT MIGHT BE NECESSARY.

4. COMMENT: ROWLAND IS IN THE CENTER OF EVENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THERE IS NO REASON TO DOUBT THE ACCURACY OF HIS MESSAGE. I THINK IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE GET BACK TO HIM QUICKLY WITH A RESPONSE. I WOULD LIKE INITIAL DEPARTMENT REACTIONS BY COB FEBRUARY 25.

SPIERS

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